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REMARKS

Claims 28, 29, 32-39, 46-48 and 53-56 remain before the Examiner for reconsideration.

In the final Office Action dated May 19, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 28, 29, 32-39, 46-48, 53-56, 91 and 92 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) "as being unpatentable over US patent 4969879, Lichte in view of US patent 6319236, Bock." Specifically, the Examiner asserted that:

In regards to claim 28, Lichte discloses a connector for use with a tapered fitting assembly having at least one attachment member, the connector comprising:

a cooperating tapered fitting (38);

at least one port (310) in fluid connection with the cooperating tapered fitting; and

a cooperating attachment member (240) attached to the cooperating fitting to engage the attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly, a predetermined level of force being required to cause the cooperating attaching elements to form a cooperating connection with the at least one attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly. Lichte does not disclose a cooperation fitting having a luer taper. Bock teaches a luer taper "mechanically connect two medical devices" (col. 1, lines 14-15). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to fabricate a cooperation fitting having a luer taper to mechanically connect two medical devices, as taught by Bock.

In regards to claim 29, Lichte discloses the cooperating attachment member engaging the attachment member via relative axial motion of the cooperating tapered fitting and the fitting assembly.

In regards to claim 32, Lichte discloses the cooperating attachment member comprising at least one axially extending arm (266) having at least one radially inward extending flange (282) projecting therefrom.

In regards to claim 33, Lichte discloses the cooperating attachment member comprising a plurality of extending arms, each of the arms having at least one radially inward extending flange projecting therefrom.

In regards to claim 34, Lichte discloses the flanges of the arms being biased radially inward in connection with the attachment member of the

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tapered fitting assembly when the connector and the fitting assembly are engaged.

In regards to claim 35, Lichte discloses the arms being resilient, flexing arms and being biased radially inward by a bending moment.

In regards to claim 36, Lichte discloses the arms being biased radially inward by a locking member (270, 272) attached to the connector.

In regards to claim 37, Lichte discloses the connector further comprising a biasing member to provide axially oriented force directed to retain the tapered fitting assembly and the cooperating tapered fitting of the connector in sealing engagement.

In regards to claim 38, Lichte discloses the biasing member comprising at least one resilient spring arm in operating connection with the cooperating tapered fitting.

In regards to claim 39, Lichte discloses the biasing member comprising a plurality of resilient spring arms in operating connection with the cooperating tapered fitting.

In regards to claim 46, Lichte in view of Bock disclose a connector for use with a tapered fitting assembly having at least one attachment member, the connector comprising:

a cooperating tapered fitting having a luer taper complimentary to the luer of the fitting of the tapered fitting assembly; and

a plurality of resilient, extending arms in operative attachment with the cooperating tapered fitting, each of the arms comprising at least one radially inward extending flange, a predetermined level of force being require to cause the radially inward extending flanges to form a cooperating connection with the at least one attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly.

In regards to claim 47, Lichte discloses a rearward surface of the radially inward extending flanges of the arms being sloped forward to cause the arms to flex radially outward when the connector is moved to contact the radially inward extending flanges of the arms with the attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly which comprises a radially outward extending flange.

In regards to claim 48, Lichte discloses a biasing member in operative connection with the cooperating tapered fitting to provide an axial force directed to maintain the tapered fitting assembly and the connector in engagement when the connector is engaged to the tapered fitting assembly.

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In regards to claim 53, Lichte discloses a connector for use with a tapered fitting assembly having at least one attachment member, the connector comprising:

a cooperating tapered fitting having a luer taper complimentary to the luer of the fitting of the tapered fitting assembly;

a cooperating attachment member operable to engage the attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly; and

at least one port in fluid connection with the cooperating tapered fitting; the cooperating attachment member comprising a plurality of extending arms, each of the arms comprising at least one radially inward extending attaching element, the connector further comprising a biasing member to provide axially oriented force directed to retain the tapered fitting assembly and the cooperating tapered fitting of the connector in sealing engagement.

In regards to claim 54, Lichte discloses the biasing member comprising at least one spring arm in operative connection with the cooperating tapered fitting.

In regards to claim 55, Lichte discloses the connector being formed from an integral piece of resilient polymeric material.

In regards to claim 56, Lichte discloses the connector being formed from an integral piece of resilient polymeric material.

In regards to claim 91, Lichte in view of Bock disclose a connector for use with a tapered fitting assembly having at least one attachment member, the connector comprising:

a cooperating tapered fitting having a taper complimentary to the taper of the fitting of the tapered fitting assembly;

a cooperating attachment member operable to engage the attachment member of the tapered fitting assembly; and at least one port in fluid connection with the cooperating tapered fitting; the cooperating attachment member comprising a plurality of extending arms, each of the arms comprising at least one radially inward extending attaching element, the connector further comprising a biasing member to provide axially oriented force directed to retain the tapered fitting assembly and the cooperating tapered fitting of the connector in sealing engagement the connector being formed from an integral piece of resilient polymeric material.

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In regards to claim 92, Lichte in view of Bock disclose the biasing member comprising at least one spring arm in operative connection with the cooperating tapered fitting.

With regard to Applicants arguments filed February 14, 2005, the Examiner indicated that "Applicant's arguments with respect to claims above have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection." Specifically, the Examiner asserted that:

The Applicant argues that Lichte does not disclose the connector being formed from an integral piece of resilient polymeric material. The Examiner disagrees. It has been held that the term 'integral' is sufficiently broad to embrace constructions united by such means as fastening and welding. In re Hotte, 177 USPQ 326, 328 (CCPA 1973). Therefore, Lichte meets the claim limitation."

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection.

Applicants have amended the independent claims to set forth an embodiment of the present invention in which the connectors of the present invention are formed from a monolithic piece of material. As indicated on page 28 of the specification:

Molding the connectors of the present invention (or components thereof) from an integral piece of polymeric material in a single molding process reduces production cost, time and complexity as compared to many currently available connectors.

In the specification, it is made clear in one embodiment, the connectors of the present invention are formed from an "integral piece" of material or formed as a single unit or piece (for example, in a single injection molding process). Applicants have thus amended the claims to more clearly indicate that the integral piece of material is monolithic. This amendment is well supported by the specification, and no new matter is added by the amendment.

Neither Lichte, Bock nor any combination thereof, discloses or suggests connectors of the present invention which are formed from a monolithic piece of material.

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In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of the claims, indicate the allowability of the claims and arrange for an official Notice of Allowance to be issued in due course.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: August 19, 2005

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